

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

Trinity College

EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 18th November 2009 at 2pm in the Board Room, House 1.

Present: Dr S Ryan (Chair), Ms A FitzGerald, Mr D Treanor, Ms L Power, Ms A Taylor, Ms A Murphy (GSU), Mr C Cashman (SU), Prof C O'Morain, Prof E Drew, Dr M Ó Siochrú, Ms K O'Toole, Ms K Campos McCormack (secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Mr D Quinn, Dr O'Doyle, Ms C Byrne, Ms T Moloney.

In attendance: Mr Brian Foley (Contact Person representative), Ms C Roughneen*

Present for: *Eqal/09-10/07-12

The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee including Dr Mícheál Ó Siochrú (Council representative), Ms Alison Taylor (Acting Staff Secretary), and Mr Cormac Cashman (SU Welfare Officer).

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/09-10/01 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 11 June 2009, were approved and signed.

Eqal/09-10/02 Matters arising

Parental Group (Eqal/08-09/40): Ms Power advised more time would be required for further consultation on the options for developing the Parental Group and increasing membership.

Gender and Promotions (Eqal/08-09/34): Ms Power noted an item in the appendix to the minutes referring to flexible work and suggested that she would provide statistics on the up-take of flexible working arrangements by staff.

ACTION: Ms Power to circulate statistics on the up-take of flexible working arrangements by staff to the Committee.

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/09-10/03 XXX Ms Campos presented the **Equality Committee Annual Report 2008-2009 and Equality Officer Annual Report** (included as an appendix to this document). This report includes the Committee's terms of reference, information on the legal context, an outline of the key issues addressed over the year (cross-referenced with the minutes) and membership details of the

Committee and sub-committees (Equality Fund Sub-Committee, Monitoring Advisory Group and Parental Group). The Committee welcomed this comprehensive report, which reflected the scope of activities addressed by the Committee in relation to policy development and staff and student issues over the past academic year 2008-2009. Ms Campos highlighted several aspects of the implementation of the Disability Act 2005; the Dignity and Respect policy implementation; discussion of the Gender and promotion report and targets; student access issues; equality monitoring development; sectoral coordination with the IUA Equality Group and management of the Equality Fund. The quorum of the Committee was clarified to be 10 people currently (50% plus 1).

The Equality Officer's report outlines the principal activities carried out by this office and includes a financial statement and service plan; Ms Campos drew attention in her report to the awareness activities completed on stereotyping and to the first Positive Ageing Week celebrated in College. Ms Campos also advised on the queries received in relation to pensions, which are currently being considered formally by the Pension Trustees.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to submit the Equality Committee Annual Report to Board together with the minutes.
- Ms Campos to amend accordingly the quorum specified in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Eqal/09-10/04 Equality Plan 2007-2009 Implementation Review Ms Campos reported on the implementation of the Equality Plan 2007-2009 (Eqal/06-07/05). The report outlines progress in the implementation of actions under the headings of: Policy development and legal compliance; Equality programmes; Dissemination and communication; and Liaison and coordination. The Committee noted the progress made in the implementation of the HEA High Level Group recommendations on data collection and monitoring, policy development in the area of disability and dignity and respect, and consultation with staff on anti-racism, gender and disability issues in this period. Ms Campos drew the Committee's attention to the work required in further implementing actions in relation to mainstreaming equality in different training programmes and advised that Staff Development and CAPSL were already involved in discussion on this item. Ms Taylor noted that training provided was needs based, and this report highlighted the needs in relation to equality matters. Ms Power noted that Staff Development currently requested trainers to sign-up to College equality policies.

Dr Ó Siochrú drew attention to the HEA recommendation included in the Equality Plan 2007-2009 regarding the implementation of mandatory training of interview panels. The Committee discussed at length the benefits of providing equality training to interview panels, and the logistical complications in rolling out a training programme to over 800 staff who might at any time be part of an interview panel in College. Ms Taylor noted that at present a Recruitment Officer sits on each panel and advises on equality legislation and policy compliance. Prof O'Morain noted that external assessors commended Trinity College's selection processes. The Committee noted the low take-up on previous training offered and discussed the possibility of an e-learning module. The Committee also discussed whether having smaller interview panels might facilitate this process, and it was suggested that liaison with the IUA Equality group might help develop

this initiative at a sectoral level. The Committee strongly supported the provision of mandatory training to staff participating in interview panels.

Dr Ó Siochrú also drew the Committee's attention to best practice models for equality programmes in Europe and particularly Nordic countries, which should continue to be used in the future development of the College's equality programme.

The Committee noted that Ms Campos would present an Equality Plan following on this implementation report and incorporating actions in support of the College's Strategic Objectives at the next Equality Committee.

ACTIONS:

- The Committee will recommend to Board that mandatory equality training is provided to staff participating in interview panels, suggesting that different options such as face to face and e-learning modules are considered.
- Ms Campos to liaise with colleagues in the IUA Equality Group to explore a sectoral approach to interview panel training.
- Ms Campos to submit an Equality Action Plan at the next Equality Committee.

Equal/09-10/05 Dignity and Respect policy update Ms Power tabled a document detailing the proposed amendment to the Dignity and Respect booklet to include the specific time-limits for cases being brought to the Equality Tribunal under Equal Status legislation. Ms Power advised that these legislative details were only included in the booklet for information purposes, and are not included in the policy. The Committee noted that Equal Status legislation provided shorter time-limits than employment equality legislation for the written notification of a complaint to the person against whom the complaint is being made.

Ms Power advised on the progress made in relation to two previous suggestions from the Committee (Equal/08-09/38 and Equal/08-09/18). Ms Power advised that cases were handled as quickly as possible and that appropriate time-lines for the investigation process were outlined at each stage to the parties. Ms Power advised that the Contact Person Panel had met frequently since September and was preparing a paper for the Committee's consideration on handling complex cases.

Dignity and Respect training Ms Power brought the Committee's attention to the policy implementation training programme which has taken place to-date with the Staff Office, Equality Officer and Contact Persons. In total, the Committee noted that over 300 staff had received between one hour awareness session and one day full training in relation to the Dignity and Respect Policy. This has taken the form of investigator training (12 investigators trained and a further 24 due shortly), School awareness sessions (154 staff), health and safety training (47 staff); weekly paid area supervisor training (135 staff). Future training will include: S2S peer support, Tutors, the Postgraduate Advisory Service and possible postgraduate supervisor training.

Ms Power advised that the Contact Persons had engaged in several training sessions: one workshop facilitated by the Counselling Service on de-

escalation and dealing with distressed people and one session on whistle-blowing.

Dignity and Respect student cases Ms Murphy brought the Committee's attention to the need for complainants to receive some degree of feedback having gone through the complaint procedure, in order to facilitate closure while respecting confidentiality. Ms Murphy also drew attention to the need for greater clarity regarding cases where there were academic and harassment components. The Committee noted that at present it could prove highly complex to advise on which was the most appropriate complaint procedure in this case. The Committee was advised that this lack of clarity could further deter a student from bringing a case.

XXX Dignity and Respect Contact Person Panel appointments The Committee welcomed the appointment of three new Contact Persons (listed in appendix). The Committee noted the resignation of Ms Caroline Forsythe and thanked her for her service to the Contact Person Panel.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to include the new appointments to the Contact Person Panel with the minutes for Board approval.
- The Contact Persons to submit a paper considering mechanisms for dealing with complex cases at a future Committee.
- Ms Power and Ms Campos to liaise with the Senior Lecturer in examining the complaint procedures for cases that might have both harassment and academic dimensions.

Eqal/09-10/06 Policy review – Access and Equality Policy Ms Campos advised the Committee of the proposed review of the College Access and Equality Policy, which encompasses student access and employment equal opportunity commitments and policies (last reviewed 2002). The Committee welcomed the suggestion to streamline this policy, updating and strengthening the Equal Status provisions and rationalising the number of equality-related policies in place. Mr Treanor suggested the title of the policy would also require updating. Ms Campos noted that the enactment of the Civil Partnership Bill expected before the end of 2009 would entail amendments to equality legislation, amongst others, and that these changes would be incorporated to the review. Ms Campos advised that initial consultation with the Staff Office, student service and access areas would take place shortly, and expected a first draft to be completed by the end of the academic year.

ACTION:

- Ms Campos to report on the progress of this review at future Equality Committee meetings.
- Ms Campos to liaise with the relevant departments in reviewing the Access and Equality Policy.

Section B – Implementation issues

Eqal/09-10/07 Mr Treanor reported on the implementation of several aspects of the **Disability Act 2005** including physical access and accessible information. The Committee welcomed the report that the paving and ramping of Front Square had been agreed and was scheduled to take place this year; that the Pavilion Bar was now fully accessible; and that accessible residencies had been developed in New Square. Mr Treanor advised the Committee that an

allocation of €400,000 for minor works had been made to facilitate the implementation of the Access Audit recommendations, and advised that this funding would be used for the cobblestone reduction programme and for the installation of automated doors in the East End of College, amongst other projects.

XXX **Accessible Information** Mr Treanor advised that he would be reporting annually on the implementation of the Accessible Information Policy to the Equality Committee. The Committee noted that three workshops were to be held on 2 December to facilitate the communication and implementation of the policy across College (workshop agenda enclosed).

The Committee also noted with concern the report that two services, the Admissions Office and the new Innovation Alliance Academy, were scheduled to move shortly to new office facilities that are not fully accessible. Mr Treanor advised the Committee that the Disability Act was clear in its instruction that where practicable, key services were to be fully accessible, and that Admissions would be considered one such key service.

ACTIONS:

- Ms FitzGerald to raise concerns regarding compliance with the Disability Act regarding the new office facilities of the Admissions Office with the Director of Buildings.
- Mr Treanor to report annually on the implementation of the Accessible Information Policy.

Equal/09-10/08 Equality Fund 2008-2009 review (circulated) Ms Campos reported on the progress of the fourteen projects selected by the Equality Fund in 2008-2009, with ten projects now successfully completed in this period and four projects cancelled. Ms Campos noted the feedback from events – which ranged from the Sports Family Fund Day to a series of workshops on Islam and Gender, talks for parents organized by the Senior Tutor's Office, or Rainbow Week activities - had been very positive from participants and organizers, and brought the Committee's attention to the good return on the investment, with many projects resulting under budget.

The Committee noted several projects had been cancelled for logistical reasons. Ms Power reported that given the difficulty in securing an appropriate facility for the Parental Group breastfeeding room, the group had undertaken further consultation with mothers on maternity leave and with the student parental group to assess the level of interest in this facility, which had to date been low. The Committee noted the suggestion that the application form might be reviewed to ensure it required sufficient information from applicants, without becoming an unduly cumbersome process that would deter applications.

Selected projects 2009-2010 (tabled) Ms Campos outlined the funding available for 2009-10 and the breakdown of applications by category. The Committee welcomed the continued increase in applications, in particular student and joint staff and student applications. Ms Campos tabled a listing of the sixteen projects selected for funding in 2009-10, including four student led projects, two joint student-staff projects and ten staff led projects.

The Sub-Committee allocated funding to projects under each of the themes outlined for 2009-10: Enriching the College community: creating links and

supports; Mental health and equality; 'Treat others as they would like to be treated' (dignity and respect); men and women in College: encouraging full participation and potential; and Challenging Stereotypes. Ms Campos noted that the list tabled was provisional until several projects submitted further details. Mr Treanor suggested that the full listing of applications be circulated to the Committee.

Ms Campos advised the Committee of the Sub-Committee's decision not to normally fund usual academic activities such as conferences, course development or fourth year projects. The Committee noted that several projects containing catering expenses had been received, despite this year's call for applications specifying that this would not be funded, and these proposals had not been supported. The Committee confirmed that the Fund's primary aim is to support projects that would not happen otherwise and are thus not part of the College's primary or essential business, and discussed how the Equality Fund's criteria might be specified more clearly in the application form.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to circulate full listing of applications to the Committee.
- Ms Campos to notify successful and unsuccessful applicants.
- The School of Mathematics to liaise with WiSER regarding their project to improve gender balance amongst postgraduate students.
- The Equality Fund Sub-Committee to consider reviewing the application form to request further logistical detail and to specify more clearly the criteria for the allocation of funding to projects.

Eqal/09-10/09 Gender and Promotions Action Plan Ms Campos reported that a draft action plan for the achievement of the gender targets approved by Executive Officers had been drafted and was being discussed with the Faculty Deans and the Staff Office. The action plan is to address the key recommendations outlined in the Gender and Promotions report. Ms FitzGerald noted that she would be discussing with the Acting Staff Secretary the key principles of this action plan to bring to Executive Officers; and that the Equality Officer would work with the Deans/Heads of Area to implement these.

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Dr Ó Siochrú brought the Committee's attention to a recommendation in the Gender and Promotions report that the Senior Promotions Committee review the paperwork involved in the promotions process, which was at present very extensive. Ms Taylor advised the Committee that the issue of paperwork had been raised last year and was currently being considered by a working group chaired by the Vice-Provost. Ms Taylor also noted that members of the Senior Promotions Committee had expressed agreement with the view that the level of paperwork required examination.

Dr Ó Siochrú brought the Committee's attention to the implications of the public sector moratorium and the impact this may have on staff taking on additional duties, thereby creating equity issues amongst staff. Ms Taylor advised the Committee that the College's priority was to ensure the continued operation of College by re-scheduling and prioritising work, but that curtailing services may be necessary. The Committee noted that the re-allocation of work should be the responsibility of Heads of School, and was advised by Ms Taylor that College was currently looking at workload allocation models. Ms Murphy noted that the moratorium would also have a significant impact on non-academic staff. The Committee discussed the

issue of maternity leave replacement, and was advised by Ms Taylor that in a devolved staffing and budgetary environment that each area have to have responsibility and due regard to financial constraints and the recruitment moratorium currently in operation.

The Committee also discussed the provision of paternity leave, which currently consists of three days paid leave, in line with the civil service. Ms Power advised that the recommendation to extend paternity leave had not progressed at IUA level given the current environment. Prof Drew noted that a paid non-transferable paternity leave provision of at least one month was currently being discussed at EU level.

Eqal/09-10/10 IUA Legacy Funding update Ms Campos reported on the IUA Equality Group projects funded by the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All Legacy Funding in 2009, which included the Challenging Stereotypes creative competition (Eqal/08-09/39); a workshop exploring the function of staff networks in supporting LGBT staff, and a follow-on workshop exploring the role of networks in relation to other equality grounds (Eqal/08-09/39). The Committee welcomed the publication of the consolidated report of the intervarsity seminars prepared by Dr Jane Pillinger: *Exploring the Function of Staff Networks in supporting equality outcomes in the University Sector* (CD tabled). Ms Campos outlined some of the main findings contained in the report: that staff networks address isolation - which is particularly beneficial to some more vulnerable groups of staff; the need for greater visibility of LGBT staff in universities; how networks function most effectively when they are 'bottom-up' driven by real staff needs, and when they receive 'top-down' support from senior champions. Ms Campos reported that the IUA Equality Group would be following-up on this report by exploring the establishment of an intervarsity LGBT network with the UCC network, and carrying out consultation on other equality grounds. The Committee noted the current staff networks in place in College: WiSER network, the Contact Persons and Parental Group – which Ms Power advised was a reference model for other universities seeking to develop supports for parents. Ms Power also noted the need for supporting staff around pre-retirement and retirement.

Funding opportunities Ms Power advised that the IUA Equality Group was seeking funding opportunities from the Human Capital Fund with the Equality Authority and was developing a proposal around building institutional competency in the selection of leaders, increasing equality awareness at executive level. Ms Power advised this would be progressed in consultation with the IUA HR Group. Prof Drew noted the longstanding successful example of women's executive development programmes in Australia.

Ms Campos advised of a funding expression of interest submitted to the Equality Authority Innovation Fund to implement a Diversity Safe modularised training programme (expected outcome due before end of 2009).

Section C – Matters for noting

Eqal/09-10/11 02 Ability Awards Application Ms Campos advised the Committee that an application had been submitted to the 02 Ability Awards in collaboration with the Staff Office and Disability Service under all 6 categories comprising:

Leadership; Learning and Development; Customer Service; Recruitment; Retention and Wellbeing; and Environmental Accessibility. Ms Campos noted that applications that were successful in the first stage would receive a full day on-site assessment in the coming year, with the final outcome due in May 2010.

Any Other Business

Eqal/09-10/12 WiSER initiatives: Prof Drew and Ms Roughneen brought the Committee's attention to a European Commission seminar on Information and Society attended recently in Brussels, where a Code of Practice for Women in ICT (Information, Computers and Technology) was advocated as a new avenue to develop good practice in promoting gender equality amongst innovative organizations.

Ms Roughneen advised the Committee that WiSER had been successful in securing funding from Framework Programme 7 Science and Society strand as partners in the project 'Mobilising Science Centres and Museums on Women and Science' (2.75 million), which would focus on the recruitment of students into Science. Ms Roughneen also reported that WiSER was bidding as part of a consortium for further funding of 4.6 million under the FP7 Capacities Work programme: Science in Society: Gender and Research: Implementing structural change in research organizations/universities.

Ms Roughneen suggested that she would liaise with Ms Campos to collate a joint report providing a cohesive picture of gender equality related initiatives in College.

Signed

Date

Appendix:

Appointments to Contact Person Panel:

- Mr Karl Flynn (Safety Officer)
- Mr Brett Williams (ISS)
- Mr Eugene Rhatigan (Security)